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<u>Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity</u>

AGEN	ICY NAME: Amherst Community Connections
AGEN	ICY ADDRESS: 76 McClellan Street, Amherst, MA 01002
AGEN	ICY PHONE NO: 413-345-0737 CONTACT PERSON: Hwei-Ling Greeney
	'ACT PERSON EMAIL: greeneyh@juno.com
2013 (CDBG REQUEST: \$40,000 (which includes \$18,000 for cash assistance; \$22,000 for case
	management)
1.	Project Name: Housing and Stabilization Project (HSP)
2.	Project Description (1-2 sentences): The Housing and Stabilization Project seeks to collaborate with area human service agencies to help extremely low-income individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to stabilize their housing situations through information and referral on various public benefits and cash assistance programs; and/or through more intense case management on housing and employment searches, and financial assistance on rent, fuel, food, and any other CDBG eligible assistance.
3.	Project Location : Amherst Community Connections, 233 N Pleasant Street, Suite #40, Amherst, MA
4.	Budget Request: \$40,000
5.	Type of Activity (check one):
	☐ Homelessness and sheltering
	☐ Youth development
	☐ Adult education and job training
	☐ Basic Human Services
	 X Emergency & preventive services: emergency rental assistance, emergency fuel assistance, emergency food and emergency shelter services that can include case management and coordination. Other – please explain
6.	Demonstrate Consistency with Community Development Strategy: Under the Community Service section of the 2013 Community Development Strategy, it was articulated that "To provide excellent, cost effective, accessible facilities, services, and programs reflecting values respectful of our ages and our diversity, which, through collaboration, contribute to a high quality safe, civil, healthy, and sustainable community."

Furthermore, it was stated that, "Especially important at this time are basic social services and services that support the chronically homeless and extremely low income,

including sheltering services, case management, and rental and fuel assistance for those at risk of homelessness."

The proposed Housing and Stabilization Project, through collaboration with social service agencies in the area, focuses its service on the particular populations who are extremely low income or are homeless/chronically homeless with the ultimate goals of securing a safe and decent housing, and becoming engaging members of the community. So, it is evident that the Housing and Stabilization Project is consistent with the 2013 Community Development Strategy.

7. Describe how you will ensure that participants meet low/moderate income requirements.

We will verify the income of participants by reviewing bank statement, recent pay stubs, SSI/SSDI income verification letter, state benefit programs award letter, and/or tax filing.

8. National Objective: According to 2010 US Census, there are about 4,000 individuals and 350 families residing in Amherst who are living below the Federal poverty thresholds. Also, according to the most recent survey conducted by the Town of Amherst in 2009, it was estimated that there were 16 residents who were *chronically* homeless. The income of these two populations is much below the low- and moderate income categories. Thus, serving them in the ways the Project describes meets the national objective.

Benefit to low- and moderate-income persons

Estimate the number of low- and moderate-income persons to benefit from the *Project*: There are about 4000 individuals and 350 families in Amherst living below federal poverty thresholds and/or are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

Total number of individuals served: 80 participants were served in FY 2012.

Total Low/Mod individuals served: Those 80 participants served were all within the Low/Mod Income guidelines.

Please submit responses to the following questions:

A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:

The goals of the Housing and Stabilization Project are to assist residents who are extremely low income, homeless or *chronically* homeless to secure housing, increase their personal income, and strengthen their engagement with the community.

ACC will have a case worker who will work with any of these residents to address matters that threaten their stability— such as lack of housing, fuels, food, and other necessities of live.

In addition, ACC will have a mental health provider who will work with the case worker to serve clients who also experience mental health problems. Together the service team will work to assist Shelter guests to meet their needs.

At night during the shelter season, the team will spend time at the Craig's Doors Shelter to engage with the Shelter guests. They are to do outreach and stay visible in the Shelter seeking out guests who are in need of assistance on mental health care, housing, sheltering, public benefits, cash assistance and other areas.

During the day, the service team will be available in the office to work with guests from the Shelter when other social service agencies are open during the day for business.

In a addition, residents who are not homeless, but are extremely low income and are at risk of losing housing can work with the service team to apply for emergency assistance on housing, fuel, food and other eligible CDBG activities.

ACC believes that coordination with other service providers is important in getting work done efficiently and effectively. Elimination of duplication in service and good coordination with other service agencies are the basis of all the service ACC provides.

B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?

The Housing and Stabilization Project serves residents who are extremely low income or homeless/at risk of becoming homeless. The high rental cost in Amherst has forced many residents to pay un-sustainable amount of income on rent. Many of them pay way above 30% of their income toward rent. For example, a one-bed apartment in Amherst is about \$800 a month on average. For a resident living within the federal poverty threshold receiving \$11,000 a year of income, would be paying nearly \$9,600 per year in rent which is about 90% of his/her income

This is a very unfortunate situation. The high rent in Amherst has put many families and individuals at risk of becoming homeless. Many of them are one pay-check away from being behind on rent and risking the possibility of eviction. Sickness of a parent or a

breadwinner, spike on health insurance premium, additional cost of medication, job loss, and many other situations may lead to one's inability to pay for rent, heat, utility, and other necessities in life.

The Project works to prevent homelessness among the extremely low income through cash assistance, and case management. These are residents who have a home but just need some assistance along the way to stayed housed. The Project will have a case management component to refer clients to other sources of funding as well —such as the Salvation Army, Hampshire Interfaith Help Fund, Community Action, and other sources.

In addition, the Housing and Stabilization Project will focus a good deal of its effort on working with residents who are *chronically* homeless. These residents live on the streets of Amherst. They are visible to all those who come to our downtown. They became a distraction in our downtown business areas where tourists and residents visit and shop.

By keeping them as the focus of the Project, ACC not only address the housing needs of the chronically homeless, but also help to decrease the service demand by these residents on our public safety, correction facility, or emergency hospital visits. This is a win-win situation.

C. Community Involvement

This project was selected as a result of ACC's work in the past three years working with Town's residents who are extremely low income or are homeless. We served about 80 participants a year who struggle with issues in housing, employment, lack of income, and other life-altering events. They are either residents who have lived in Amherst for a while or are guests from the Craig's Doors Shelter.

The service team of mental health provider and case worker will be available in the office to work with ACC participants. They will do street outreach and will visit Amherst Survival Center, Jones Library, Bangs Community Center, and any place where extremely low income residents or homeless residents are most like to be. By staying visible and remain mobile, there is a much greater likelihood that the service team can maintain involvement of the beneficiaries in the implementation of the Project.

D. Project Feasibility

The project impact will be evaluated upon the extent to which the response meets the following criteria:

1. Describe what evidence exists to show that the community at large or project beneficiaries will use the project. Include documentation of demand for the activity through summary descriptions of surveys, inquiries, waiting lists or past participation.

Amherst Community Connections has been working with people who are extremely low income, disabled or are homeless since it was established in 2009. We serve

about 80 participants a year. We do follow-up after our program participants have moved into housing situation or secured employment. We provide financial assistance to participants on rent, transportation, prescription filling, replacement of state ID or birth certificate, and many necessities in life.

We provided food service and case management for the Warming Place in 2009 at the First Baptist Church. We also collaborated with Milestone Ministries and Craig's Doors -- the Shelter operators of in 2010 and 2011, respectively. We provided meal service, volunteer recruitment and case management, information referral, and direct cash assistance to shelter guests.

All together in the past three shelter seasons, ACC produced nearly 10,000 hot meals and recruited hundreds of volunteers to work at the Shelter. So far since 2009, through its effective advocacy and case management, ACC has assisted 60 to 80 Shelter guests in obtaining housing, employment, Supplemental Security Income payment, food stamps, Commonwealth emergency cash assistance, among many state or federal benefit programs.

2. If applicable, describe and document the availability and source of matching or other funds needed to complete the project.

Amherst Community Connections receive private donations from individuals, businesses, and faith communities. Please refer to the *Income and Expenses Statement*. On average, we raise about \$14,000 per year. Since we are an agency relying 100% on volunteers, no one on staff receives salaries. After all expenses paid, we are able to have about \$4,000 per year in surplus. We have in savings about \$14,000 as of today. We will tap into our account and use \$14,000 from our Agency's reserve to complete the Housing and Stabilization Project.

We have an array of volunteers who assist us in carrying out our work. We have volunteers who produce high quality meals for the Shelter. We have case workers who volunteer 20-30 hours a week seeing clients and visiting the Shelter during winter season. We have housing attorney/consultant providing legal service free of charge. We have office administrators provide office support free of charge. We are an agency run by volunteers who are accomplished professionals in their chosen fields. That is why we are able to have a minimum budget and yet accomplish much in terms of serving residents who are extremely low income or are homeless.

However, we are prepared to do serious hiring for a well-credentialed case worker and mental health provider to continue to provide excellent service.

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in the project as well as internal controls.

Our ACC board members will continue their tradition to provide professional service at no charge to the Agency. They are listed below:

- Samuel Andrews is our treasure. He is a certified public accountant. He manages our payroll.
- Laura Quinn is our grant writer. She assists in grant writing and application for additional funding.
- Sundarii McGrigg is a board member. She served on the Amherst Committee on Homelessness. She participates in public meetings to advocate for the needy.
- Cindy Utama is our business/art manager. She assists in fundraising effort. She also manages our office/art gallery activities.
- Maria Yorgakopoulou is our food service manager. She is ServSafe certified. She provides support in meal service.
- Tamara Rutland-Mills is our secretary. She served on Community
 Development Committee—the precursor of CDBG Advisory Committee, and
 assists ACC participants to access additional social services.

Staff and volunteer workers

- Hwei-Ling Greeney is our executive director and volunteer case worker. She
 is also ServSafe certified.
- Lisa Carabello is our graduate intern from Smith College. School of Social Work. She provides ACC with research assistance on housing for people with sex offense histories. She works with ACC participants to do case management.
- Michael Serduck is our attorney consultant. He is a practicing attorney in Amherst. He provides pro bono legal service to ACC.
- Case worker: tbd
- Mental Health Provider: tbd
- 4. Citing past accomplishments, document that the agency has the necessary past expertise to conduct the activity and has successfully completed past activities in a timely manner.

We provided food service and case management for the Warming Place in 2009 at the First Baptist Church. We also collaborated with Milestone Ministries, and Craig's Doors -- the Shelter operators of in 2010 and 2011, respectively. We provided meal service, volunteer recruitment and case management, information referral, and direct cash assistance to shelter guests.

All together in the past three shelter seasons, ACC produced nearly 10,000 hot meals and recruited hundreds of volunteers to work at the Shelter. So far since 2009, through its effective advocacy and case management, ACC has assisted 60 to 80 Shelter guests in obtaining housing, employment, Supplemental Security Income payment, food stamps, Commonwealth emergency cash assistance, among many state or federal benefit programs.

For example, in one winter alone, in 2011-2012 shelter season, thanks to ACC's intense case management and coordination with other human service agencies in the area, 20 shelter guests were able to obtain employment and the other 25 secured housing.

5. Please submit a program budget that includes all sources of revenue and all expenses.

See the Attached: Current FY 2013 Budget

E. Impact

Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs. What measurable improvements will result from the activity? How much of the need will be addressed? Define the direct and indirect outcomes that will result from the project. Identify quantitative and qualitative measures determine that the outcomes are achieved.

Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs: The Housing and Stabilization Project will have a steady presence in the community. To complement the current homeless service available in Amherst, ACC's service team will have office hours every day Monday through Friday at its office. The office is centrally located in a visible downtown shopping plaza, Amherst Carriages Shops. It is on the bus route and is within a short bus ride or walking distance to the target population who most likely live in apartment complexes such as Anne Whalen Apartments, Clark House, Chestnut Court, South Point Apartments, Village Park Apartments, and many others.

Measurable improvements: The impact of the Housing and Stabilization Project can be measured by the number of families and individuals that the Project assists. The more residents are engaged in the Project, the more likely they can stay housed and remain stabilized. The measurable improvements resulting from the Project are the number of families and individuals that are prevented from being evicted, losing electricity service

for non-payment of utilities bills, and other less quantifiable indicators such as a less stressful/happier family life experienced by household members.

How much of the need will be addressed: Given the \$40,000 funding of which \$18,000 will be for emergency financial assistance and \$22,000 for case management, ACC estimates residents will have access to the service team and its volunteers 3 hours/day, 5days/week, and 50 weeks/year. ACC estimates that for an in depth and meaningful engagement, about 80 participants can be served. The service team will be able to see 10-15 participants a week at one-hour interval.

Direct and indirect outcome resulting from the Project: The direct outcome of the Project will be less housing eviction, more food security, and more stable home environment. Extremely low income families and individuals will have a stronger safety net. More likely, as a result of cash infusion at a critical juncture, housing can be preserved, and eviction can be prevented.

The indirect outcome will be less involvement of law enforcement or public safety personnel with people who experience homelessness. There should be less people on the streets of Amherst begging for money, appearing intoxicated, sleeping in public places, among other outcomes.

Quantitative and qualitative measures that the outcomes are achieved: Quantitatively speaking, there should be a decrease in the number of housing evictions, and a decrease in the number of chronically homeless residents in Amherst. Qualitatively speaking, the general public or tourists/visitors to the Town of Amherst should experience more of the charm of a small college town and less of the problems of a big metropolitan city such as panhandling, homeless residents sleeping on park benches, among other problems.

F. Evaluation

Goals & Assessments: Please explain your short-term goals and long-term goals. Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success. How will these changes be measured? Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? Will there be additional beneficiaries? Will this service enable clients to become self-sufficient? How is this service linked to other human/social service programs in the community?

Short-term goals: To provide emergency housing, fuel, food assistance and other emergency assistance to residents who are extremely low income or are homeless/chronically homeless.

Long-term goals: To provide wrap-around housing service to ensure residents who have experienced chronically homeless can remain housed. To prevent them from reverting back to situations that lead to their being homeless again.

Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success: The target population will maintain its housing, employment/community engagement. This will indicate the Project is a success.

How will this be measured: ACC provides follow-up service to its participants. It will be deemed a success if at a 6- to 12 month interval, a given participant still has housing, remained employed, or engaged in community volunteer work, or stays sober/drug free.

Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? Yes, ACC expects the positive changes in the target population-- such as an enhanced stability in housing/employment, will lead to a more engaged citizenry. They are more able to participate in civic service such as serving as town meeting members, committee members, and other volunteering opportunities. In addition, the demand on municipal public safety personnel such as police or ambulance/EMT should decrease as a result.

How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? The impact of the service on individual clients can be tracked over time by-- for example, through reviewing police log or ambulance calls. It has been demonstrated when chronically homeless individuals are housed, the amount of public service used—police/ambulance/correction facility, decreased greatly. Studies have shown the cost of housing a chronically homeless individual with onsite social service is about \$20,000 per year. In contrast, the cumulative costs of police/emergency service/correction facility/shelter are nearly twice as much. In terms of public dollar spent, it makes a great deal of sense to provide wrap-around supportive housing to the chronically homeless.

Will there be additional beneficiaries?

Yes. There will be additional beneficiaries. These include a more pleasant shopping and visiting experience in downtown Amherst, less stress and strain on public safety officers, among other beneficiaries.

Will this service enable clients to become self-sufficient?

Yes, the service will enable clients to become more self-sufficient. The whole premise of ACCs' service is empowerment and self-reliant. We model self-advocacy and personal-responsibility in our work with our clients--who we prefer to call "participants". They participate in their road to self-empowerment and advocacy. To help them become the best advocates for themselves, we walk with them-- not in front of them, but side by side with them. We aim to maintain their pride and self-identify. We work with them in a respectful and dignified manner. At the end, our goal is that they will hold themselves accountable for all the decisions they make, and ultimately they will become self-sufficient.

How is this service linked to other human/social service programs in the community? ACC's Housing and Stabilization Project will engage Amherst Survival Center, Family Outreach of Amherst, Not Bread Alone Soup Kitchen, Craig's Doors, ServiceNet, South Middlesex Opportunity Council, and Eliot Homeless Services. These are partners who we have active working relationship already. We also participate in the regional effort to end homelessness. We are a contributing member of the Western Mass Network to End Homelessness.

Currently, ACC works with the Network to conduct research on the extent of homelessness among people with sex offense histories. Our goals are twofold. We plan to propose legislative changes to maximize the safety of a community AND to maximize the housing stability for people with sex offense histories. We will present our findings in three community forums slated monthly starting in January, 2013.

ACC also collaborates with the Conservation and Development Department of Town of Amherst. ACC assists its participants to access Town's emergency funding. It works with the participants to make sure all the documents are in place before accompanying them to the Town Hall to apply for funding.

In an emergency situation, when Town Hall is closed on weekends, holidays or in the evenings, ACC still conducts intake and assist needy residents who request for emergency sheltering assistance. This 24/7 service ACC provides has helped the Town of Amherst to address the emergency housing needs of many frail residents in Amherst.

G. Agency Information

Please provide an overview of your organization, including length of time in existence, experience in successfully conducting activities for which funding is being sought, and skills and current services that reflect capacity for success.

Amherst Community Connections was established by Hwei-Ling Greeney in 2009. It is based in Amherst. It serves primarily residents from Amherst. In 2011, ACC received federal 501(c) (3) status.

Prior to that, Ms. Greeney operated Not Bread Alone Soup Kitchen for twelve years successfully. Both programs serve Amherst residents who are very poor or are homeless. Her experience working with the target population is significant. All together, she has fifteen years of experience working with people to assist them in housing, advocacy, empowerment, and other areas.

All together in the past three shelter seasons, ACC produced nearly 10,000 hot meals and recruited hundreds of volunteers to work at the Shelter. So far since 2009, through its effective advocacy and case management, ACC has assisted 60 to 80 Shelter guests in obtaining housing, employment, Supplemental Security Income payment, food stamps, Commonwealth emergency cash assistance, among many state or federal benefit programs.

Currently, we have about sixty clients who are working actively with ACC. Our continued financial assistance to our participants such as providing bus passes or cell phone allows them to go to work or to stay in touch with their family and/or potential employers.

ACC collaborated with Craig's Doors in last shelter season. As a volunteering agency, ACC provided professional supervision and support on the food service component of the Shelter program. It organized the production and serving of nearly 5000 dinners and 3000 breakfasts throughout the 185 days when the Shelter was open.

The shelter guest, volunteers and staff appreciated and enjoyed the wholesome food served every night. The service was consistent. Every night, in the course of an hour, 25-30 people were efficiently fed. In a respectful and professional manner, everyone was provided with plenty of soup, sandwich and salad for supper. ACC spent its own fund to sponsor a volunteer to attend training in safe food handling. Five days a week, this volunteer who is now ServSafe certified, arrived at 6:00 AM to make breakfast. The menu varied and individuals could have a choice of many items on the menu.

In addition, ACC recruited many volunteers from local faith communities, higher education, or community at large to help with the Shelter work. Several hundreds of them worked in the kitchen, and on the floor. The volunteers recruited were consistent and plentiful. They brought much positive energy with them. Shelter guests were greeted with genuine concern and compassion. ACC has an excellent track record in organizing and attracting community-spirited volunteers.

With their daily interaction with ACC through the meals service, guests developed a sense of familiarity, comfort and trust with ACC staff/volunteers. As a result, the majority of the 165 plus shelter guests chose to work with the Agency during the day to do case management. Many of them stopped by ACC's office when they left the Shelter in the morning. ACC's office is located near the Shelter in a convenient downtown location. For many guests, this was a stop they made daily before they started their day.

ACC provided intensive case management with the participants/shelter guests. With twice-a-day contact and interaction with many of the Shelter guests—one casual and friendly at the Shelter during meals, and one during the day in the ACC's office, ACC was able to motivate them to tackle tough issues, such as alcohol and/or substance addiction problems, gambling problems, spousal abuse/domestic violence issues--- that make them become homeless. With ACC's information and referral service, they were able to connect with detox centers, domestic abuse service agencies, among others, to get themselves back on their feet.

At the same time while these guests were working to address these problems, ACC was coordinating other services to ensure that application for public housing, food stamps, Mass Health and other public benefits programs were also in place while the shelter guests were completing the addiction treatment programs.

This relentless advocacy and consistent professional service provided by ACC has led many of Shelter guests—now they had become ACC participants, to move out of the shelter and into their own housing. Along away, many of them also had found employment.

ACC piloted a mentoring program for Shelter guests since 2010. It provided stipend to shelter guests who were also receiving intense support from ACC at the same time. The ACC participants/shelter guests worked daily with First Baptist Church volunteers to clean the Shelter, maintain the ground, and weekly to sort bottles and cans to purchase food for the emergency pantry program located at the First Baptist Church. At the end of the Shelter season, six (6) guests participated in this mentoring program. They all received a stipend from ACC during their mentoring period. It helped to pay for some of their daily expenses. The work ethics developed and the strong local connections they made with the First Baptist Church volunteers through the mentoring program eventually helped all of them to find employment and secure their own housing by the time the Shelter was closed at the end of April.

ACC also provided cash assistance to those who found employment but had no money to purchase uniform, tools, monthly bus passes, and things needed for them to start their employment. For those who were looking for work but did not have a phone number for potential employers to contact them, ACC provided cell phones loaded with free minutes for them to use.

ACC's dedication and professionalism in case management and coordination---backed by its generous financial support and cash stipend to shelter guests, produced great results. At the end of the 2012 shelter season, 20 of the Shelter guests had located employment, and 25 secured housing.

ACC also collaborates with the Conservation and Development Department of Town of Amherst. ACC assists its participants to access Town's emergency funding. It works with the participants to make sure all the documents are in place before accompanying them to the Town Hall to apply for funding.

In an emergency situation during the off-shelter season, when Town Hall is closed on weekends, holidays or in the evenings, ACC still conducts intake and assist needy residents who request for emergency sheltering assistance. This 24/7 service ACC provides has helped the Town of Amherst to address the emergency housing needs of many frail and sick residents in Amherst.

All the experiences cited here really demonstrated the abilities and skills ACC possesses to work with the most difficult people to secure housing/employment and to help them to become contributing members of the community again. They reflect ACC's capacity for success.



From: Housing for All Citizens Group, Reikka Simula Gooden, vice chair

Reither Simula Goden

To: CDBG Advisory Committee

Date: September 14th, 2012

Re: Recommendation letter for Amherst Community Connections, Inc.

We are pleased to lend our support to Amherst Community Connections for its application for the 2013 CDBG social service funding. We are writing to you the members of the CDBG Committee, to share our enthusiasm for ACC's Housing and Stabilization Project put forth in front you.

Fragile housing situation

As a citizens group, we are committed to affordable housing for all. As you might know the cost of rental in Amherst is higher than surrounding towns and cities due to the large demand on housing by the 30,000 student body from UMass. As a result, the available rental units for the extremely low income residents or residents who are homeless are nearly non-existent and are very difficult to find. A very large percentage of our families and individuals are paying more than 30% of their income for rent. At some rare extremes, they are paying as high as 90% of their income towards rent. This is not surprising. Based on a recent US census, there are 4000 or more residents and 350 families in Amherst who are living below the Federal poverty guideline. This means that a family of four lives on \$23,000 a year or less. Considering the rent for a two bedroom apartment in Amherst is \$1,200 or more a month, a family of four could be paying up to 60% or more of their income just on rent.

This is a very unfortunate situation. The high rent in Amherst has put many families and individuals at risk of becoming homeless. Many of them are one pay-check away from being behind on rent and risking the possibility of eviction. Sickness of a parent or an individual, spike on health insurance premium, additional cost of medication, job loss, and many other situations may lead to one's inability to pay for rent, heat, utility, and other necessities in life.

Homeless prevention

We are excited to see ACC's Housing and Stabilization Project will provide a well thought-out safety net to meet the unexpected needs of families and individuals. The Project works to prevent homelessness among the extremely low income through cash assistance, and case management. These are residents who have a home but just need some assistance along the way to stayed

housed. The Project will have a case management component to refer clients to other sources of funding as well –such as the Salvation Army, Hampshire Interfaith Help Fund, Community Action, and other sources.

Solving the problems of the chronically homeless

Finally, we are excited to see that Amherst Community Connections will put its strongest effort on working with residents who are currently homeless—many of them have been *chronically* homeless for years. According to the Town's 2009 Feasibility Study on Housing for Homeless, it was estimated about 16 residents are *chronically* homeless.

Housing for All realizes that services are offered to the residents who are homeless in Amherst at the Survival Center and Not Bread Alone Soup Kitchen. However, the hours are very limited. All together, only six hours a week are available. This is not enough to serve the 4000 residents and 350 families who are at risk of becoming homeless or people who are currently homeless or *chronically* homeless. In our un-official estimate, we believe that there are 100 families/individuals in Amherst who are homeless sleeping on some one's couch or elsewhere.

The Housing and Stabilization Project under the management of Amherst Community Connections will provide a staff person who will provide *daily* service to residents who are at risk of becoming homeless or are currently homeless. In addition, they have the weekend- and after-the-hour service to provide emergency case management for those who find themselves on the street and are in need of emergency sheltering placement.

Community recognition

The work of Amherst Community Connections is well recognized. In 2009, when the Warming Place was first open, it was the only agency there to provide hot meals and case management to guests. For the past two winters, it collaborated with the shelter operators—Milestone Ministries, and Craig's Doors, to provide meal service and case management.

ACC's track record can be best seen through the number of shelter guests who have found housing and secured employment. At the end of the shelter season this year, the Agency reported that it assisted 25 shelter guests to obtain housing and 20 to secure employment. Currently, Amherst Community Connections is sponsoring an art exhibit for an artist who resides in Amherst but was *chronically* homeless for many years. It is clear that ACC recognizes that the first step in helping people is to empower them. Housing for All believes this is the best and most supportive way to work with people.

For all these various reasons mentioned above, we at Housing for All would like to give our most enthusiastic support to Amherst Community Connections for its Housing and Stabilization Project proposal in the 2013 CDBG application. We sincerely hope that you will give the Proposal your utmost serious consideration.



Craig's Doors - A Home Association, Inc.

256 North Pleasant Street Suite 4 A, Amherst, MA 01002 -1729
P.O. Box 101, Amherst, Masaschusetts 01004-0101
www.craigsdoors.org • (413) 437-0776

DATE:

17 September 2012

TO:

CDBG Advisory Committee

FROM:

Jerald H. Gates, President

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Kevin J. Noonan, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Letter of support for Housing and Stabilization Project

Submitted by Amherst Community Connections for 2013 CDBG Social Services application

We are writing to offer our enthusiastic support to Amherst Community Connections (ACC) for its *Housing and Stabilization Project* proposal for the 2013 CDBG social service application.

Craig's Doors collaborated with ACC during the 2011-2012 shelter season. As an unpaid collaborative partner, ACC provided professional supervision and support, particularly on the food service component of the shelter program. It organized and produced nearly 5000 dinners and 3000 breakfasts throughout the 184 days season. Our guests, volunteers and staff appreciated and enjoyed the wholesome food. Each night, over the course of an hour, 25-30 people were efficiently fed in a respectful and professional manner. Plenty of soup, sandwiches and salads were served and five days a week, an ACC volunteer made breakfast. Guests chose from several impressive menu items.

ACC recruited many volunteers from the local faith community and community at large and over 150 volunteers assisted in the kitchen, and in the shelter. Volunteers were consistent, talented and had positive energy. As a result shelter guests were greeted with genuine concern and compassion.

Many guest stopped by ACC's office each morning for intensive case management. ACC motivated guests to tackle issues which contributed to their becoming homeless, such as substance abuse / addiction, gambling, domestic violence. ACC's information and referral service, helped guests connect services and agencies which helped them get back on their feet. ACC also coordinated applications for public housing, food stamps, Mass Health and other public benefits programs.

ACC's advocacy led many of guests to move out of the shelter and into their own housing and many found employment. ACC has also sponsored a mentoring program for shelter guests since 2010. It provides stipends to guests who were also receiving intensive case management from ACC. Several guests in the ACC mentorship program worked daily with First Baptist Church (FBC) volunteers to clean the shelter, maintain the grounds, and to sort bottles and cans to defray the cost of food for the emergency food pantry program located at the FBC. At the end of the shelter season, six guests participated in this mentoring program. They all received a stipend from ACC during their mentoring period. It helped to pay for some of their daily expenses. The work ethic developed and the strong local connections they made with FBC volunteers through the mentoring program eventually helped all of them to find employment and secure their own housing by the time the shelter was closed at the end of April.

ACC also provided cash assistance to those who found employment but had no money to purchase uniforms, tools, monthly bus passes, and things needed for them to start their employment. For those who were looking for work but did not have a phone number for potential employers to contact them, ACC provided cell phones loaded with free minutes for them to use. ACC's case management and coordination---backed by its generous financial support and cash stipend, produced great result. At the end of the shelter season many guests found employment and secured housing. From the excellent meals program coordinated to the successful transitions made by many guests, Jerry and I are very pleased to give our strong endorsement for ACC's application for the 2013 CDBG social service application. ACC's Housing and Stabilization Project which has been submitted for CDBG funding has been tested last winter and it worked well. We urge you to seriously consider its application.

Amherst Community Connections

"Everyone Deserves a Second Chance"
76 McClellan Street Amherst MA 01002 413-345-0737

Twelve-month Projected Budget for 2013 CDBG Housing and Stabilization Project

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1. INCOME	
i. Personal appeal	\$16,000
ii. CDBG funding	\$40,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$56.000
2. EXPENSES	
a) Emergency fuel/housing/food, and other	\$18,000
CDBG eligible assistance	
b) Participants projects	\$1,500
c) Community Relations	\$200
d) Copying	\$200
e) Employee salaries	\$20,000
f) Employee taxes @12%	\$2,400
g) Fundraising expenses	\$2,500
h) Food/Household/Office supplies	\$300
i) Phone	\$700
j) Internet	\$600
k) Postage	\$200
l) Rent	\$3,900
m) Transportation	\$400
n) Utilities	\$600
o) Website	\$500
p) Administration	\$4,000
TOTAL EXPENSES (Add a through p)	\$56,000